SECRET

31 October 1958

The Files

[redacted] 50X1

Conference Report, Drop Zone Beacon Program

1. On 23 October 1958 a conference was held at 2038 "I" Building to discuss the status of the Drop Zone Beacon Program. Participating in this discussion were:

[redacted] 50X1

Air Division, DD/P
Air Division, DD/P
Chief of Operations
OC-T
OC-T/OT
-T/OT-OR
Chief, OC-E
ef, OC-E/BAB-EP 50X1
OC-E/BAB-EP

2. [redacted] said the Air Division was anxious to inform the [redacted] 50X1 [redacted] 50X1 of the status of the CIA beacon program. He said there was virtually unanimous dissatisfaction with the SARAH system, due to the need for extensive aircraft modification, the heavy battery required, and the ambiguity of the over-beacon indications. He described recent changes in air resupply tactics which are contained in [redacted] 50X1 and suggested that OC make itself aware of them in the event that these changes modify the requirements for the drop zone beacon. He said that only about 5% of resupply runs use beacons and indicated that beacons might be abandoned entirely if a useful one was not forthcoming.

3. [redacted] 50X1 described a transistorized beacon that a Los Angeles Company had developed for the Air Division at a cost of $5,200.00. The beacon, which operates on 1200 kc, is turned on by a signal from the aircraft and the pilot is able to obtain a range indication at any time by triggering the beacon. The pilot homes on the beacon with his standard aircraft ADF, and receives an over-beacon indication when the ADF needle swings 180 degrees. The ground beacon weighs 5 lbs., including battery. The finished beacon is due to be delivered in the next 30 days and [redacted] invited OC to observe field tests of this system at Eglin Air Force Base, Florida. 50X1

SECRET

4. The proposal for this beacon had been reviewed by OC last spring and a recommendation made against its employment since it was believed that a broadcast band beacon would probably have serious ground radiation. [redacted] 50X1 said that this system uses a unique transmission method and that the contractor did not feel that the agent would be jeopardized by the ground radiation from this beacon.

5. [redacted] reviewed OC's efforts to devise a beacon meeting the 50X1 requirements set forth by the former DD/P Materiel Board. A recent [redacted] 50X1 [redacted] study recommended a radar UHF cressband beacon as the most feasible method 50X1 of meeting these requirements by making use of existing aircraft equipment. The contractor had been furnished a list of aircraft equipment supplied by AMD. Mr. [redacted] pointed out, however, that not all aircraft which are available for air 50X1 operation have the X-band or S-band radar required by the J&B beacon.

6. [redacted] reported on a Magnavox beacon used for sonobuoy recovery 50X1 which employs a radar-VHF crossband technique very similar to that recommended by J&B, although the aircraft radar is on continuously. Magnavox described the modifications which could be made to the system to allow the pilot to leave his radar off except for occasional short bursts, in order to minimize the danger of detection.

7. [redacted] suggested that it would be well for OC to observe the 50X1 forthcoming Elgin tests of the broadcast band beacon, but that its own program to develop a beacon meeting the original requirements should not be delayed. [redacted] suggested that the Air Division, as the using element, have the 50X1 Technical Requirements Panel review the old Materiel Board beacon characteristics to determine if they were still valid, and suggested that the broadcast band beacon be tested against these revised requirements.

[redacted] 50X1

OC-E/R&D-EP/WJB:wlj (31 October 1958)
cc: R&D Subject File
Monthly Report (2)
Chief of Operations, [redacted] 50X1
Air Division
OC-T
OC-T/CT
OC-T/OE-OR
R&D Lab
R&D Chrono
EP 1 Chrono